

Up-date on the New Orleans Flood Fight

Vicksburg, MS., 5 September 2005 – Positive news reported overnight on the work by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in closing off the breaches at the 17th Street Canal, London Canal and IHC.

“The primary focus today is to assess the pumps within the city and to work to get some of those started today,” said Greg Breerwood, deputy district engineer for Project Management, managing the flood fight from the New Orleans emergency operation center located in Vicksburg, MS. “We’ll want to start those pumps slowly to watch the impacts on the system, trying to ensure no damage as the system begins to sustain the increase in flow.”

Over the last several days, water has continued to flow slowly out of the city aiding in the flood fight; however access to several of the sights have required the Corps and its contractors to overcome major hurdles. Progress has been sufficient to allow the contractors to be in position to completely close the breach at 17th Street, and the breach at the London Street Canal has been completely closed.

“We also made breaches in the St. Bernard and Plaquemines Parrishes to assist in lowering water levels in those neighborhoods,” Breerwood said. We are also moving additional pumps into the area to start the un-watering mission of the city. Safety and Caution will be the focus today to ensure we limit the risk of further damage.

“It’s a mission we are looking forward to getting underway.”

There still remains the challenge of raising the bridges over the Industrial Canal to commence waterborne operations, but we have several barges inhibiting that work. Security and safety of the contractor workforce is a major concern as well as civil unrest prohibited the crews from remaining in the area.

Navigation along the Mississippi River has also been opened to vessels under 39-foot draft.

The current information is:

Un-watering of the City:

17th Street Canal – Dropped over 200 Blackhawk and Chinook sand bags. Approximately 125 sandbags have broken the surface of the water. Staged 3 ea 42” mobile pumps and placed 2 ea 42” and 2 ea 30” pumps at the sheet pile closure. Sewer & water board, electric utility and 249th Prime Power Engineer Battalion completing pump house inspection.

London Avenue Canal – mouth of canal is closed except for gap left to allow reverse flow. Contractor validated an approach route to the 17th street bridge for access. Will start 24 hour op in Mirabeau Bridge breach using sand bags dropped from Chinooks.

KATRINA

2-2-2

Pumps -

- a. St. Charles-- All pumps are Green
- b. St. Bernard Parish – 5 pump stations are operable, 2 are demolished, 1 undetermined.
- c. Plaquemines Parish – Once pumping station is pumping.
- d. Orleans Parish – Coordinating with Orleans Sewer and Water Board to determine status.

Plaquemines Parish – First mechanical breach of a levee was done today at Bohemia (mile 45 MS River) on the lower east bank. Breach is 35 feet wide, expanding to 200 feet. Six feet of flood water is trapped inside levee is now draining out. The Memphis District Grading Unit Reached Mississippi River Mile 60 preparing for a second breach.

Mississippi River Gulf Outlet Canal – Contractor arrived at MRGO to perform breach along the Hurricane Protection Levee. Ground inspection showed only 1 foot of head difference so no breaches are needed along the MRGO.

Chalmette – Contractor mobilized marsh buggies to reach along the Verette Return Levee Canal. Contractor is preparing to breach approximately 200 feet of levee in each location.

New Orleans East – Reconnaissance of two sections of hurricane protection levee showed one foot difference of interior and exterior water elevations so no breaches will be required. The Levee Board reports all 30" drainage sluice gates are open and operational.

Questions regarding this news release can be referred to the Mississippi Valley Division Emergency Media Operations Center at 601-631-7979 or 5856.